

Hardy Hydroelectric Plant,
Oil House
6928 East 36th Street
Newaygo Vicinity
Newaygo County
Michigan

HAER No. MI-100-F

HAER
MICH
62-NEWAY
IF-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Great Lakes Systems Office
1709 Jackson Street
Omaha, Nebraska 68102-2571

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

HARDY HYDROELECTRIC PLANT, Oil House

HAER No. MI-100-F

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Location: 6928 East 36th Street
Newaygo Vicinity
Newaygo County
Michigan

UTM: 16:61780:4815560
Quad: Croton

Dates of
Construction: 1931

Engineers: Edward M. Burd, head of civil and hydraulic engineering for
Commonwealth Power Corporation, Jackson, Michigan

Present

Owner: Consumers Energy Company (formerly Consumers Power Company),
Jackson, Michigan

Present Use: Storage building at hydroelectric generating plant

Significance: The Oil House is part of the Hardy Hydroelectric Plant, built in the early 1930s as a link in Consumers Power Company's system of electric power generation. In designing and building Hardy, the company found a way to erect a stable, relatively high dam on Michigan's notoriously gravelly foundations, continuing its tradition of developing solutions to the problems presented by Michigan's geography and geology. The design process for the dam also appears to reflect a tendency in American civil engineering to favor regional practices over technology developed elsewhere.

Project

Information: This documentation was prepared by Consumers Power Company (CPCo) in conformance with its Cultural Resources Management Plan for the Muskegon River Hydroelectric Projects (July 1995). The plan stipulated the recordation of the entire Hardy Hydroelectric Plant (according to the standards of the Historic American Engineering Record). The documentation was completed in 1997 by Hess, Roise and Company of Minneapolis under contract with CPCo. Cynthia de Miranda served as Project Historian under the supervision of Principal Investigator Jeffrey A. Hess. Project photography was completed under a subcontract with Hess Roise by Clayton B. Fraser of Loveland, Colorado.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Oil House at Hardy Hydroelectric Plant (HAER No. MI-100) is a steel-framed, rectangular-plan, single-story brick building on a concrete foundation situated on the downstream (south) slope of the Embankment (HAER No. MI-100-A) just northwest of the Powerhouse (HAER No. MI-100-B). Aligned on the same northwest-southeast axis as the Powerhouse, the building measures 26'-0" x 14'-0". Three rectangular, industrial steel-sash windows with soldier-course lintels and concrete sills punctuate the downstream (south) facade. Centered beneath the middle window is a small, shuttered vent; an identical vent, just below the roofline at the midpoint of the upstream (north) facade, also facilitates air circulation within the structure. A single-leaf steel personnel door allows entry from the southeast.¹

The Oil House resembles the Powerhouse in its yellow-brick cladding and green clay-tiled, hipped roof. However, it does not display the elaborate Spanish Colonial Revival detailing of its larger neighbor. Instead, its adornment is restricted to a simple beltcourse and corbelled cornice. A concrete retaining wall, running southeast from the northern corner of the building to the far end of the switching yard, physically connects the Oil House to the Substation (HAER No. MI-100-C) and Powerhouse.

¹ Although the Oil House is actually aligned on a northwest-southeast axis, full cardinal points are used in descriptions for the sake of clarity. This description is based on a site survey completed by the authors on 24 July 1995 and on engineering drawings obtained from Consumers Power Company. See Allied Engineers, "Plan, Elevations, and Details of Oil House, Hardy Dam," Drawing No. M164-F1267, 10 November 1930, Hydro Operations, Consumers Power Company, Cadillac, Michigan.

HISTORY

The Oil House was built in conjunction with the Hardy Hydroelectric Plant (HAER No. MI-100), which was erected in 1930-1931 by Allied Engineers for Consumers Power Company of Jackson, Michigan. Most of the work on the small building was done late in 1930.² The structure provided storage for oil and other operating supplies needed at the hydroelectric generating plant.

² This information is based on views in the collection of construction photographs maintained at the plant.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

HISTORICAL VIEWS

Hardy Hydroelectric Plant construction photographs. Hardy Hydroelectric Plant, Muskegon River, Michigan.

ENGINEERING DRAWINGS

Allied Engineers, Inc. "Plan, Elevations, and Details of Oil House, Hardy Dam." Drawing No. M164-F1267, 10 November 1930. Bridge Street file storage, Consumers Power Company, Jackson, Michigan.

_____. "General Plan: Hardy Development." Drawing No. M164-F1272, 11 November 1930. Hydro Operations, Consumers Power Company, Cadillac, Michigan.